



Public Lands Integrity Act

U.S. Senators Michael Bennet (D-Colo.), Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.),
Ron Wyden (D-Ore), and Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.)

During the consideration of the *One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA)* last year, the Senate weighed proposals to sell up to 3 million acres of public lands to offset other spending. Amid strong bipartisan opposition, these provisions were stripped from the *OBBBA*. However, under current budget laws, future budget reconciliation bills could include similar land sales under a fast-tracked legislative process.

The Public Lands Integrity Act would put safeguards around future reconciliation bills to ensure that America's public lands – held in trust for the benefit of the American people in perpetuity – cannot be sold to fund short-term tax or spending provisions in expedited budget legislation. Specifically, it would amend the Congressional Budget Act's (CBA) "Byrd Rule." The reconciliation process – established under the CBA – allows legislation affecting revenue and spending to pass the Senate on an expedited timeline and by a simple majority vote. To prevent the inclusion of unrelated policy, the CBA includes the "Byrd Rule," which makes "extraneous" provisions subject to a 60-vote threshold.

The Public Lands Integrity Act would:

- Amend the CBA to designate any reconciliation provision that results in the sale, transfer or disposal of federal public lands as "extraneous" under the Byrd Rule;
- Allow any Senator to strip a provision proposing the sale of federal public lands from a reconciliation bill by raising a Byrd Rule point of order; and
- Ensure that decisions about the future of federal public lands are debated through regular legislative order, rather than rushed through expedited budget procedures.

Importantly, the Public Lands Integrity Act would not affect existing federal agency authorities for small land disposals or swaps, or Congress's ability to consider such proposals through regular order.